

## **2 SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 SURVEY POPULATION**

Reclamation has approximately 6,200 employees. The Customer Service Initiatives Team decided to include each employee in the survey rather than survey only a sample of the employees. The team felt that it was important to the goals of the survey that each employee have an opportunity to provide input.

### **2.2 SURVEY DESIGN**

Argonne designed the survey instrument in an interactive process with appropriate Reclamation staff. Argonne met with Reclamation's Customer Service Initiatives Team on January 14, 1999, in Denver to discuss the goals and objectives of the survey. Together, they determined that the overall goal of this survey would be to provide Reclamation with information on how it could improve its customer service practices. Specific survey objectives were to:

- Determine employees' basic understanding of customer service principles and agency policies regarding customer service,
- Determine the level of interaction between employees and customers,
- Gather data to compare employees' perceptions of customer service with customers' perceptions,
- Solicit ideas for customer service improvements from the staff members who most frequently deal with customers,
- Learn what employees believe are Reclamation's greatest strengths and challenges in customer service, and
- Establish a baseline of customer satisfaction for use in future benchmarking of customer service.

Many of the Employee Customer Service Survey questions largely mirrored those in the Customer Satisfaction Survey (Appendix A), incorporating minor rewording to gauge how employees rather than customers viewed customer service (i.e., "I" and "my" were replaced with "customers"). Additional questions were added to gather information specific to employees; for example, questions on training were added, and employee recommendations and comments were solicited.

The Employee Customer Service Survey was an 8-page, half-sized booklet divided into five sections with a total of 16 questions measuring 44 attributes (Appendix B). It included a cover and instruction page along with 6 pages of survey questions, including both closed- and open-ended

questions. The closed-ended questions were either categorical or followed Likert scales. The open-ended questions gave employees an opportunity to express opinions that otherwise may not be captured or addressed by closed-ended questions. The five sections of the survey are titled as follows:

1. Employees' Performance in Customer Service
2. Your Role in Customer Service
3. Reclamation's Performance (as an agency) in Customer Service
4. Reclamation's Performance in Programs and Initiatives
5. Information About You

The first section contained two questions. The first provided an "off ramp" for employees who deal with customers on an annual or less frequent basis. This mechanism was provided because the survey's main purpose was to gather information from employees who interacted with customers on a regular basis. Employees who deal with customers on an annual or less frequent basis were asked to skip to the end of the survey and provide demographic information. These employees were also given an opportunity to respond to a general open-ended question if they choose. The second question in the first section was a modified version of a question from the Customer Satisfaction Survey regarding Reclamation staff..

The second section contained six questions that focused on employees' experiences in customer service: awareness of customer service policy, training, importance of customer service, and comfort of employees in dealing with customers. Respondents were also asked to provide a suggestion for an action that the agency could take to help employees improve customer service.

The third section contained three questions. Two of the questions, modified from the Customer Satisfaction Survey, asked employees to rate Reclamation's attitudes and performance in customer interactions. The third was an open-ended question regarding Reclamation's strengths in customer service.

The fourth section asked employees to evaluate Reclamation's performance in 14 different areas (i.e., programs and initiatives). These questions were identical to those in Section 3 of the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The last section asked employees to categorize their geographic/organizational affiliation and position. This background information provided information to help management interpret survey results by organizational unit and position type and determine the representativeness of the survey responses.

## **2.3 SURVEY PILOT TESTING**

The pilot test of the draft survey instrument was conducted during the week of January 31, 1999. The 10 employees from the Denver Office who participated in the pilot test and completed the draft survey then answered a short questionnaire about their experiences (Appendix B). Respondents provided comprehensive feedback on the survey instrument, wording of questions, scales,

utility of the survey content, and time required to complete the survey, and they also provided additional comments. The survey instrument was then revised to incorporate the changes recommended during the pilot test. The final survey instrument was completed on February 19, 1999.

## 2.4 SURVEY MAILING

The final survey instrument was bulk mailed during the last two weeks of March 1999 to each Reclamation office for distribution. The survey mailing included preaddressed return envelopes.

Completed surveys were received steadily over the allotted 30-day period. The response period was extended an additional 30 days because a number of responses were received late.

## 2.5 DATA PROCESSING

Argonne designed a graphically based interface for the survey database (Figure 2.1). The database incorporated traditional coding of variables, including the assignment of unique case numbers to each survey response. The database interface mirrored the survey so that data entry personnel could copy the answers from the survey instrument to the database without converting to numeric codes. For example, for question 1.1, if the respondent checked “daily,” the data entry personnel checked the box for “daily” on the computer screen. Additional instructions were included on the screen for other codes or instructions. This setup decreased the opportunity for data entry errors and increased the reliability of the input data.

**Section 1: Employee's Performance in Customer Service**

Do the respondent answer any questions in this section?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Customer Number (automatically generated)

**1.1** Please describe how often you interact with Reclamation's external customers (i.e. customers outside the agency)?

☒ If individual referred annually or less, did they still answer any questions from Sections 2.3 or 4?

☐ Daily  
☐ Weekly  
☐ Monthly  
☐ Quarterly  
☐ Annually or Less  
☐ No Response  
☐ Indeterminable

**1.2** Please describe how you agree with the following statements...

In dealing with external customers, Reclamation's staff are...

Accessible	Helpful	Knowledgeable	Timely in their responses	Courteous/respectful
<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Always
<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Often	<input type="radio"/> Often
<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes
<input type="radio"/> Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Rarely
<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Never
<input type="radio"/> Don't Know	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know
<input type="radio"/> No Response	<input type="radio"/> No Response	<input type="radio"/> No Response	<input type="radio"/> No Response	<input type="radio"/> No Response
<input type="radio"/> Indeterminable	<input type="radio"/> Indeterminable	<input type="radio"/> Indeterminable	<input type="radio"/> Indeterminable	<input type="radio"/> Indeterminable

**Enter and Move to Next Section**

FIGURE 2.1 Data Entry Screen for Employees Customer Service Survey